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## Maine: Acadia National Park

### Travel Style - Guided Walking Tour

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep into the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.



In the oldest national park east of the Mississippi, quiet trails lead to serene ponds fringed with blueberry bushes, lobster boats chug to tiny islands, and rocky coastline gives way to glorious balsam forest. One of the best walking destinations in New England, Acadia is interwoven with over 100 miles of historic trails and carriage roads—many built by John D. Rockefeller Jr. a century ago. Walking here, you'll encounter herons stalking fish in limpid ponds, you'll peer into miniature tide-pool worlds along the rugged coast, and you'll witness the panorama atop Cadillac Mountain, a weathered peak of pink granite dotted with cinquefoil. Go beyond the park to explore charming Bar Harbor, with its bustling docks, galleries, and quaint shops. Enjoy a symphony of chowders, lobster, blueberry pies, and other traditional Maine delicacies, famously abundant and superbly fresh. Acadia offers a glimpse of a traditional New England way of life; come experience it with us.

## Tour Only Itinerary - 2019

### Day 1

#### Arrival in Bangor

*Paradise Hill - Witch Hole Pond Loop; 2-3 miles, easy. Sieur de Monts Spring area, Jessup Path, Hemlock Loop, and the Tarn; 4 miles, easy to moderate. Lower Hadlock Pond Loop; 2 miles, easy*

Upon meeting your guides at the Bangor Airport, you depart immediately for the one-hour drive to Acadia National Park, and proceed directly to the park's visitor center. An introductory walk along one of the park's many carriage roads leads to Witch Hole Pond, and provides views of Frenchman Bay and Hull's Cove to the northeast, as well as the distant mountains to the north. In the first half of the 20th century, John D. Rockefeller Jr. not only donated about one-third of the park's land, but he also conceived of and oversaw the construction of the extraordinary network of carriage roads that wind throughout the park, graced with subtle landscaping and handcrafted stone bridges.



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After lunch at a seaside restaurant, an afternoon walk in the Sieur de Monts Spring area takes you, via the Jessup Path, to a mountain pond known as the Tarn. A series of plank bridges skirt the open marsh and provide views of Huguenot Head, Champlain Mountain, and Dorr Mountain. You connect to the Hemlock Loop, which dates back one hundred years to when the walking paths connected downtown Bar Harbor to Acadia National Park. The well-graded paths and log and plank bridges provide good footing in this area.

After a short drive to Lower Hadlock Pond for an enjoyable loop walk, you arrive on foot to your home for the next two nights, where there is time to linger in the manicured grounds and perfectly situated Adirondack chairs, or perhaps take a dip in the ocean-side swimming pool, in the late afternoon sunlight. Tonight you enjoy a traditional boiled lobster dinner with all the fixings.

### **Accommodation: Asticou Inn, Northeast Harbor**

A simple historic inn housed in a four-story mansion dating from 1883, with beautiful views from the common areas over Northeast Harbor and just minutes from Acadia National Park.

## Day 2

### **Flying Mountain Trail**

*1-2 miles, easy to moderate. Beech Mt. North Ridge Trail; 2 miles, moderate, or Ship Harbor Trail; 1-2 miles, easy*

Today's walks take place on the "quiet side" of the Island, the western less-traveled side of Mount Desert Island. This morning, you hike Flying Mountain, which rises 284 feet and gives extraordinary views of Somes Sound from above. Lunch today is at a local restaurant in Southeast Harbor, where you might enjoy a lobster roll and their famous Maine blueberry pie. After visiting the Bass Harbor lighthouse, one of the most-photographed lighthouses in Maine, your guide presents you two options for this afternoon. For those who want a more challenging option, a walk on Beech Mountain gives an excellent overview of the region. The trail gradually ascends the western flank with views of Long Pond and Blue Hill across the sparkling waters of Blue Hill Bay to the west.

At the summit, near a closed fire tower, you look over the towns of Southwest Harbor and Northeast Harbor, the entrance to Somes Sound, and the Cranberry Isles lying offshore to the south. The trail descends some rocky ledge before looping back to the trailhead in Somesville. If you prefer a more relaxed walk, Ship Harbor Trail offers a view of quintessential Maine coastal scenery, the easy figure-eight trail leads right to the tranquil shoreline of Ship Harbor, and exits through a cool forest of spruce and cedar trees.

This evening, you dine at your hotel restaurant while taking in the view of the beautiful Northeast Harbor.

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### Day 3

#### Little Cranberry Island

*3-4 miles, easy to moderate*

After walking in the island's interior and rocky shore, today you discover one of the secluded islands off Mount Desert's southern coast. After breakfast overlooking the sound, you catch a chartered fishing boat out of Southwest Harbor for the hour-long crossing to Little Cranberry Island. The five Cranberry Isles—Great Cranberry, Little Cranberry (or Isleford), Bear, Baker, and Sutton—are from one to five miles offshore and are named after the low-bush wild cranberries that grow profusely throughout their terrain. The islands' year-round residents, mainly lobstermen and boat builders, are joined each summer by visitors, some of whom have been returning for generations.

The ferry docks at the island's main village provide a true glimpse of authentic Maine coastal life from another era; piers and wooden buildings are clustered in a sheltered cove. A quiet road leads up to a grassy bluff and continues through groves of tall firs, passing white clapboard cottages. A picnic is unpacked at a perfect spot overlooking glimmering water and a pebbled beach, with distant sailboats skimming the ocean's surface. After looping back to the village dock, you board your boat in the afternoon for the return trip to Southwest Harbor.

After a short drive to bustling and quaint Bar Harbor, the island's largest community, you settle into an in-town resort hotel with a water's edge marina overlooking Frenchman Bay and the open ocean. For dinner, you are welcomed to Bar Harbor with a taste of its ocean bounty, perhaps fresh steamed lobster or littleneck clams.

#### **Accommodation:** Bar Harbor Inn, Bar Harbor

A *Travel + Leisure* "World's Best Hotel." Located on shady waterfront grounds, this grand resort offers both in-town convenience and an oceanfront location just minutes from Acadia National Park.

### Day 4

#### Jordan Pond

*Bubbles Loop; 3-5 miles, easy to moderate*

After a hearty breakfast, you set off for the day's walk at Jordan Pond, a serene freshwater pond in the park's interior. The trail circles the pond, winding through blueberry bushes, clusters of white birch and shady spruce. At the pond's northern end are two symmetrical hills called the Bubbles, North and South, over 700 and 800 feet high, respectively. Reflected in the pond's pristine waters, the peaks are also in view throughout the walk. Along the water's edge you may see a great blue heron, or a pair of black-and-white common loons.



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A longer and more challenging option leads to the summits of both Bubbles, where you are rewarded with views of Eagle Lake, another freshwater pond lying just to the north, as well as Conner's Nubble and Frenchman Bay. Looping back to Jordan Pond, you are ready for a satisfying lunch at the Jordan Pond House Restaurant, a historic teahouse-style restaurant dating from the late 19th century and serving a range of soups and chowders, salads, sandwiches, and its signature popovers. Later, you celebrate your Acadian adventure at an elegant restaurant, toasting your exploration of this stunning region over creative gourmet cuisine.

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## Day 5

### Shore Path

*1-2 miles, easy. Great Head Loop; 2 miles, easy to moderate. Ocean Path; 2 miles, easy, or Gorham Mountain Trail; 2 miles, easy to moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain and loss*

The morning's walks are devoted to the ocean side of Mount Desert Island, starting at sheltered Sand Beach, a gorgeous 300-yard long beach nestled between Great Head and Newport Cove. Enticing yet chilly, the constant Atlantic surf has created its unique pastel sand, composed of tiny pulverized shell fragments. Departing from Sand Beach, the Ocean Drive Trail is justifiably one of the park's most popular trails—dramatic views stretch along the oceanfront from Sand Beach to Otter Point. In the middle the level gravel trail drops to Thunder Hole, named for the sound of the water crashing into a narrow channel in the coastal ledge. The historic trail, which was part of the original trail network dating from the late 19th century, was completely restored and resurfaced about 10 years ago, and rises to Otter Cliffs, the highest ocean-edge cliffs in the park. Baker's Island is in full view to the south, and a slice of Little Cranberry Island can be seen to its west.

The Great Head loop departs from the eastern end of Sand Beach and follows the peninsula's headland, with views south back to the beach, the Ocean Path, and Otter Cliffs. As you climb through windblown grass to its highest point of 145 feet, waves crash below; offshore, pleasure and fishing boats ply the eight miles of open water framed by the Schoodic Peninsula to the east. Returning to the trailhead on a bog walk, you are ready to enjoy your picnic lunch.

This afternoon you have two walks to choose from. The first option is a hike along the Gorham Mountain Trail, which provides sweeping views of the morning's walks along the Ocean Path, Sand Beach, and Great Head. The gradual ascent up open ledges features ridge-top panoramic views as your trail follows the ridge that runs north to Champlain Mountain, part of the chain of mountains closest to the ocean. The second option is to follow the Ocean Path along a beautiful and dramatic stretch of coastline between Sand Beach and Otter Point. Returning to Bar Harbor in the mid- to late afternoon, you can take full advantage of the resort amenities at the hotel, such as the seaside heated pool and Jacuzzi, and then continue the evening at your own pace by strolling into Bar Harbor for



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dinner on your own.

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## Day 6

### **Cadillac Mountain and North Ridge**

*1-2 miles, moderate*

No visit to Acadia is complete without a trip to the top of Cadillac Mountain. Not only is it the highest point in the park at 1,530 feet, but Cadillac Mountain also has the distinction of being the highest point on the entire North American Atlantic coastline. This morning you drive to a point where the North Ridge Trail intersects the access road and hike the final mile to the treeless summit, which offers breathtaking views over Bar Harbor, Frenchman Bay, and the open ocean spread before you. Named after Sieur de Cadillac, a 17th-century French explorer, the mountain offers evidence why Cadillac’s compatriot and contemporary, Samuel de Champlain, called the entire island “Mont Desert”—for its bare and, when viewed from the ocean, apparently “desert-like” mountaintops.

After stopping for lunch, you arrive at the Bangor Airport by mid-afternoon for your onward travels.